NEW PUBLICATIONS.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN'S DEFENSE.

MR. BUCHANAN'S ADMINISTRATION ON THE EVE OF THE REBELLION. By JAMES BUCHANAN, Ex-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. New-York: D. APPLETON & Co. 1866.

Mr. Buchanan thus explains the tendencies of his mind as a thinker and a statesman in the first sentence of his remarkable and interesting volume: "That the Constitution does not confer upon Congress power to interfere with Slavery in the States has been admitted by all parties and confirmed by all judicial decisions ever since the origin of the Federal Government." He further contends that, "after a careful review of the anti-Slavery party from its origin, the candid inquirer must admit that, up till this period (Kansas-Nebraska bill), it had acted on the aggressive against the South." This is the arraignment of the loyal North by an ex-President of the United States. Only by such an arraignment, successfully made, can proceed his vindication. If it can be proved that we as a people were entirely wrong, then Mr. Buchanan, as President, was entirely right. He takes pains to tell us that, as a Senator, thirty years ago, he contended that Slavery must be maintained by the Union—for, when the Union failed in this task, then disunion did not "become a question of expediency but of self-preservation." We can easily understand how a statesman who believed in Slavery as a fundamental element of our political economy—who saw around him Constitutions, Senates, Supreme Courts, for the sole purpose of eternizing that institution—might regard the events of the past four years as a vindication of his career.

James Buchanan is a type of the Pennsylvanian as it may be seen in the beautiful valley of the Cumberland—a district bordering on Slavery and Freedom, and which was long known as a kind of Pennsylvania Egypt, where the people were oppressed with a sense of the divinity of Slavery, and were only visited by those enterprising anti-Slavery men who never feared the howling of a mob. He has in his veins the Scotch-Irish blood that has given us Grant, and Jackson, and Calhoun, and many of our most eminent Americans. He was of a good family, and had—what was a rare advantage at the close of the last century—a classical education. He went into public life at the age of twenty-three; he was seventy when he retired from the Presidency. For nearly fifty years, he had been in office. He knew the occult science of Pennsylvania politics, and of all the class of tortuous, cold, much-contriving wire-workers who flourished in that State, none was greater or more successful. He was a safe man. He never frightened staid and sober Pennsylvania with novelties. There was nothing of Boston about him. He never worried his constituents with "ideas," but went on in his plodding way, shrewd, secret, prudent, self-reliant—moving up from high to higher—eminently conservative—full of compromises—avoiding dangerous issues, with the canny Scotch nature that came with his blood—until the Presidency was given him at last—as a refuge from the Squatter Sovereignty of Douglas and the Plantation Democracy of Pierce. His mediocre safeness alone could meet the enthusiasm of the gallant Fremont and his followers. He met it, and went into power, partly as we fear by the frauds of desperate men of his school who managed his fortunes in Pennsylvania, and partly because there were many who feared that Fremont might bring trouble, while it was certain that Buchanan would not. How we mistake destiny! If John C. Fremont had been elected in 1856, the Fifteenth President of the United States would not have found it necessary to write a vindication.

The philosophy that saw nothing grander in our institutions than the eternity of Slavery was sadly out of place in the Presidential Chair in 1857. The Nation was suffering from the crime of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. It was now seen that the South not only intended to protect Slavery but to extend it by breaking covenants sacred by many years of successful and harmonious compact. Slavery had been advancing, and every advance was a triumph. Mr. Buchanan thinks that Slavery was "more sinned against than sinning." He is welcome to his opinion; and we admire the persistency with which he clings to it. He does not see the crime of wantonly breaking a covenant—which had benefited the South by giving Missouri to Slavery, merely that new territories should be added to its ample and blighted domain. This was the sin of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. The North justly regarded that measure as a crime. At the same time, it gave Mr. Buchanan a great opportunity. The law of progress had shown that, in any contest requiring wealth, emigration, population, thrift, the keen, wiry, snow-loving men of New-England were the masters of the dull, sluggish, sun-dried Southerners. The South knew that in a contest for the possession of Kansas it would fail, unless Northern enterprise could be met with force and fraud. There is no use in repeating the history of the crimes committed against Kansas. They have gone into history with a dreadful expiation, and we should not recall them did not Mr. Buchanan insist that during these troubles he acted as the friend of freedom. He might have made Kansas a national triumph. He could not undo the mischief generated by Douglas; but he could say that, if popular sovereignty was to prevail, then the people must be sovereign, and no Southern ruffians should make Kansas a slave-pen. Mr. Buchanan, unfortunately, no sooner entered the Presidency than he fell under the influence of certain gifted men, base in purpose but resolute in will. Slidell, and Davis, and Benjamin, and Wise, surrounded him and put upon his cold, querulous, anxious nature the pressure of unyielding authority. He might have dealt honestly with Kansas, and the Nation would have stood by him. He failed, and even the South, in the end, went against him. When the hour of agony came, the men for whom he sacrificed his fame abandoned him and treated his prayers with contempt.

The experiences of Mr. Buchanan were, unfortunately, not of a nature to fit him for strifes like those of 1859-60. He was accustomed to the political prostitution called compromises, and, as a public man, had become debauched. He had heard the "anger" of the North before, and saw it stilled by a florid speech from Mr. Clay, or magnificent adjectives from Mr. Webster. If Boston could permit Anthony Burns to be dragged through her streets, Boston certainly would not make a war about a poor, unsettled territory. If it did, then he would arrange a compromise and in a superb way write appeals to God and the Union. Such chaff was much relished in Boston. It had served his turn before, and would serve again.

So, when the voice of despair and entreaty came from Kansas, and it was known that sword and bullet, and false election-ballots, were to be used to force Slavery upon its people—that Popular Sovereignty in theory was Border-Ruffianism in practice—the President could not summon up the courage to quarrel with the resolute men who were goading him into slave-hounding, and he determined, in the weakness of his nature, to close his eyes to crime, and fraud, and violence, compel Kansas to come into the federation as a Slave State, and afterward make an affectionate appeal for union to appease an outraged North. The Democratic party, of course, would support him; if it did not, he would use the guillotine as Pierce had used it in 1854. It is painful to read how he struggles to escape the Nation's judgment on Lecompton in his volume. He tells us that, as President, he had no Constitutional resource but Lecompton. Topeka was "illegal;" and because the freemen of Topeka would not go to Lecompton and be controlled by ruffians like Stringfellow—because the false and stupidly fraudulent returns from Oxford were not admitted—then the freemen of Kansas allowed the State to become slave by default, and should bear the blame. Walker, and Stanton, and Geary, all attempted to carry out his purpose; but their honor rebelled, and they came home. The President would not or could not yield. Behind him were stern and cruel men like Davis and Slidell, who had the old man in their power, and oppressed him. As they willed, he spoke. They willed the degradation and infamy of Kansas.

Then came the dissolution of the Democratic party. Mr. Buchanan thinks the Wilmot Proviso was the measure which "placed the two sections of the Union in hostile array against each other." We do not think so. That proviso was a defensive measure. The South had demanded Texas so sternly and with so much fury—had at last gained Texas by war, and was advancing across the Rio Grande to other wars merely to aggrandize Slavery—that the proviso became necessary as a protest. The Democracy of the North—the Democracy of Leggett and Wilmot and Chase—could not be made the uncomplaining car-captive of Slavery, and hence the protest. From that time, the spirit of resistance became fixed, but it was only a spirit of resistance. In the end, by frightening the money-changers and the timid cotton-buyers, the South gained. It carried the Compromises, obtained Texas, won the Fugitive Slave Law, opened the Territories to Slavery by the Nebraska bill, and, under the lead of Mr. Buchanan, attempted to inject the virus of Slavery into the pure and fresh blood of the virgin territories. The attempted pollution of Kansas aroused the North. Anti-Lecompton was the first aggressive blow, and a man from the Democracy, a leader for Slavery in other days, came forward to champion it.

But for this man, Stephen A. Douglas, the anti-Lecompton controversy would have been merely a politicians' brawl. He made it a national cause, and fought it to the end with so much energy and fire that even his well-knit and sturdy frame gave way, and he fell in the hour of battle at a time when a large party in the nation looked to him as a leader. The sorrow for Douglas was soon lost in the din of a mighty war; but we cannot justly review Mr. Buchanan's book without noticing this remarkable man. He was the Laertes of this drama, making very much such a fight, dying in the contest, and taking the Hamlet of Democracy with him. Douglas was a man of great nature. He was the most buoyant of Americans, full of life and aggressiveness and animal vigor, a man of the multitude, who would have been a Broderick in California, a Butler in Massachusetts, a Toombs in Georgia. Illinois made him a Douglas. The two mistakes in his character were his subserviency to "organization" and an insane yearning for immediate success. He was not a man of destiny. He could not afford to wait. He went direct to his purpose, and, in the fascination of temporary triumphs, lost that moral strength and maturity which made Lincoln invincible in politics and Grant invincible in war. He became a public man with his manhood, a Judge at 29, a Congressman at 30, a Senator at 34, a candidate for President at 40. He felt that the organization called Democracy could elect a President; and, as the South controlled that organization, he became the most subservient of all the Southern allies. He never rose to the moral elevation that saw Slavery a sin, and all that profited by its strength as sinners. These men of sin were President-makers, and Douglas was too keen, too anxious, too hungry, to evade their fascinations. He was the most gifted, the most popular, the most strenuous of Democratic statesmen, the most accomplished debater in America, quick, apt, ready, irrepressible. In the contest with Mr. Lincoln, in 1858, he gained the temporary triumph. His keen antagonist, sustained by the moral principle of his cause, was the final victor. Cincinnati showed Douglas that his ideas of advancement had failed. The South deserted him, and Pennsylvania politicians holding stock in Mr. Buchanan forced that plausible investment upon the Southern market. If Douglas had been elected President in 1856, he probably would have postponed the irrepressible conflict twenty years. If he had been elected President in 1860, he might have been the Danton of revolutionists, and ended it in two years. He died too soon. The mistakes (it would be harsh to say crimes) of his life were nobly redeemed by its closing months. The war might have dwarfed him as it did his peers; but we think it would have developed and strengthened his intense Americanism. It is known that at the time of his death he was about to take a command in the army. Around him were such men as David C. Broderick, a Senator from California; his friend, the pure-minded and gallant Harris of Illinois, then sinking rapidly into the grave, John B. Haskin of New-York, and Robert J. Walker of Mississippi. David C. Broderick was a quaint type of the American character. His life had been a struggle. He had struggled with poverty, and gained a limited education, a knowledge of literature which rose to the level of Bulwer, whom he considered superior to Shakespeare. Born in Washington in 1818, where his father cut stone for the Capitol, brought up in New-York, in the school of desperate and unscrupulous politicians that made Tammany Hall a prize-ring, he became a fireman, a Ward manager, and sought to reach Congress by these agencies. Defeated by F. A. Tallmadge, he went to California with the feverish multitude of 1849. As he stood talking to some of his friends on the gangway of the steamer, he said: "I shall not return until I return as Senator." A man with the energy of Broderick was fitted to command the elements of strife and anarchy that reigned in the new country. He found California a grand Tammany Hall, and rose rapidly. In two years, he became the President of the Senate; in seven years, he was chosen Senator, defeating Mr. Gwin, but with a melodramatic idea of revenge, showing that the Bowery taint was still in the veins of the Senator, and that he had not forgotten the education of the Ninth Ward, allowed the election of Gwin as his colleague on condition that he would write a letter of submission, and would claim no patronage from the President. A man base enough to make such a promise was base enough to break it. Gwin came to Washington, and was admitted to the confidence of the President. Broderick became at once the enemy of the man who had broken the melodramatic oath, and of a President who refused to be bound by a contract made in the legislative lobbies of Sacramento. He was ripe for rebellion, and went with joy to anti-Lecompton. With his broad, earnest face, his deep, gray eye, his sad, half-shy manners, his coarse hands and large bones, in morals an ascetic, in scholarship a neophyte, in politics a man determined to win, he was the impersonation of what Americans call pluck. Among those who stood at his side on the gangway of the California steamer was John B. Haskin, then a ruddy-faced young lawyer, whose name was occasionally mentioned in the newspapers as a member of Democratic Ward Committees. In his veins ran the blood of Dutchmen who had lived for 200 years by the side of the Harlem River. But more pleasing than tending sheep on his father's acres was the noise and excitement of New-York politics. This man rose rapidly until he represented the home of his ancestors in Congress. Broderick was energy—Haskin audacity. Broderick had immense respect for organizations. Haskin loved to break "rings" and smash "slates." If there had been no sin in Mr. Buchanan's course, the tendency of Haskin's nature would have sent him into opposition before the end of his first term. From the moment he joined the alliance, there was no rest. Others might hesitate. He went forward like a busy, restless spirit, hunting up recruits, stimulating the weak, denouncing the treacherous, going with the Republicans in organizing the House. John W. Forney, Mr. Buchanan's life-long friend, and a man of resolute, earnest nature, a keen judge of the motives of human action, an agreeable speaker, and superb politician, joined the alliance, as well as John Hickman of Pennsylvania, an orator and thinker, an earnest, thoughtful man, who never rose in his seat but, with his haggard, grizzly face, his incisive, deliberate, dissecting sentences, commanded the attention of the House. He went with Forney to the Republican party without, we think, taking part in the intermediate comedy of "supporting Douglas."

The anti-Lecompton alliance gave to the Republican party the strength of victory. It broke the Democratic organization, united the North, and showed the South the hopelessness of eternizing Slavery by legislation. Anti-Lecompton was the first aggressive blow. John Brown struck the second. Lincoln's election, the natural fruit, was the third. Anti-Lecompton aimed at the life of Democracy. John Brown at the life of Slavery. The Democracy killed Douglas; Slavery killed Brown. The spirit of the men lived after them.

We have lingered upon this anti-Lecompton episode because its effect, as one of the causes of the Rebellion, was decisive. As we just remarked, it was the first effective step of national resistance to Slavery. Mr. Buchanan's defense of Lecompton is the weakest part of his book. He tells how sadly he felt over the trouble occasioned by the Lecompton Constitution, and repeats one of his many lectures upon the necessity of obeying the law. When Lecompton had run its course, his soul turned for consolation to the Dred Scott decision, which involved all "the contested questions in regard to Slavery," and "presented to him a cheerful but delusive prospect." He confidently expected that "the decision of the Court would settle all the questions and eventually restore harmony among the States." This Dred Scott business was remarkably characteristic of those crafty old politicians, Buchanan and Taney. The President, in his inaugural, enjoined obedience to the prospective decision. Two days after the inaugural, Taney rendered it! The points of that infamous decree all men know. How it saddened the National heart by showing that Slavery had at last risen to the fountain-head of all law and justice, and that nothing remained to freedom but a battle for its existence! Taney was a Democratic politician of the cast of intellect fitting him for a prosecuting attorney, who had been made Chief-Justice for obeying an unjust decree of the imperious Jackson, and who never, during his many long years upon the Supreme Bench, forgot that he owed his ermine to the Democratic party. The most exalted citizen of America, he was Slavery's most suppliant tool. Mr. Buchanan is surprised that the infamous decree of a small, narrow-minded politician, was not accepted by the Republican party! In vain. It was not written in the book of fate that one weak, old, partisan Judge should revise the decrees of God. Mr. Buchanan's "confident hope" speedily became "delusive." "Let us take warning" he says, "that the late disastrous civil war, unjustifiable as it was, would most probably never have existed had not the American people disobeyed and resisted the Constitution of their country, as expounded by the tribunal which they themselves had created for this express purpose." In other words, Mr. Buchanan would have us know that the war would never have occurred if we had quietly bent down beneath the yoke of the slaveholders, accepted Slavery as a new Gospel, Slidell as our political Messiah, Davis as President, Taney as an apostle, and the Montgomery Constitution as our moral law. You were not alone in that thought, Mr. Buchanan, in 1861.

We cannot dwell with Mr. Buchanan upon the Helper Book, the strifes of Conventions, the Democratic rupture at Charleston, its final dissolution at Baltimore, the rival nominations of Mr. Breckinridge and Mr. Douglas, and all the petty strifes of the canvass. Events were rushing, and at this time there suddenly appeared one of those phenomena that come in the ages—something more than human—who are cast like sunlight across the centuries, who become apostles, and Bible-makers, and the preachers of sermons upon the Mount. Moses, Confucius, Plato, Shakespeare, Toussaint, John Brown, are world-men, neither Chinese, nor Greek, nor Italian, nor negro, nor philosophers, nor poets, nor warriors—but phenomena, the moral growth of ages, and, as Mont Blanc dwarfs the Pyramids, outlive and diminish all worldly fame. What are Napoleons, and Fredericks, and Marlboroughs, to these? They are mere soldiers, who fire guns and build roads, and call themselves kings, and ruin millions that they may have palaces, and velvet cloaks, and diamond-studded sceptres to play with. The higher order of men, whom we in our bewilderment call phenomena, our children will revere as apostles; and, when all these ages are dead, our language only remembered by poring monks, and nothing left of us but strange and fanciful fables, become ideas like Hercules, and Jupiter, and Vishnu. Such a phenomenon was John Brown. Who was he? Whence did he come? Was he of good family? Did his parents belong to the church? Was he ever an Assemblyman or a Member of Congress? He came from nothing; and yet he had in him the thought of this age, and he spoke it, and acted it, and sealed it with his blood. Before him the greatest of us are mere opera-goers, readers of newspapers, loungers on Broadway. Mr. Buchanan calls him "lawless, violent and fanatical." It is poetic and moral justice that a James Buchanan should abuse a John Brown. When God sends us a David, he generally adds a Saul.

Mr. Lincoln was chosen President, and the strife was upon us. It was evident that Slavery was about to fight for empire. What should we do? Surrender all it demanded, and look to the future for reason and a resumption of our old relations, or draw the sword at once and compel obedience? The month succeeding Mr. Lincoln's election was one of anxiety and speculation. Some were willing to avert war; others wished peace on any condition; but all desired to honorably avoid a strife. Many wise men thought that if the Southern people wanted to secede they should be permitted. Gen. Scott, in his celebrated paper called "Views," written October 29, 1860, proposed a subdivision of the Republic into minor Confederacies, as the only way of avoiding "the laceration and despotism of the sword." In addition to this speculation, the General added the intensely practical suggestion that the forts in the Southern States should be garrisoned, to prevent their being taken by surprise! This one fact neutralized his philosophy. It was, however, the time for philosophy. Many records are now reprinted and discussed, which, at that time, were nothing but the legitimate efforts of brave and good men to escape the terrors of war. The noblest statesmen of that time were those who endeavored to avoid its necessity. They loved peace with the fondness of patriots who saw nothing in war but crime, and desolation, and national woe. As a gifted writer said of statesmen similarly placed, they loved peace so fondly they would not believe she was dead, and could scarcely be torn from her cold embrace. They longed for the time when "the war-drum throbbed no longer and the battle-flags were furled;" and in this dear land they trusted that we had reached that consummation of all worldly happiness, the time when all men's good should be each man's rule, and

> "universal Peace,
> Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
> And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
> Through all the circle of the golden year."

They loved peace, however, as the strength and beauty of the nation's life and not as its price. They wished no compromise, but only fair dealing. So far as Mr. Buchanan sympathized with this feeling, we honor him. But the charge we make is that he sought peace at the price of National dignity. We can readily excuse his dislike to Gen. Scott's philosophy, but we can see no reason for his neglect to garrison the forts on the Mississippi and the coast. He was the Executive. He had one duty, and that was to prevent, at any cost, the degradation of the country. He tells us that Gen. Scott presented no "practicable plan." He had no troops, he says, but "four hundred men." Lincoln found men; but, even accepting this excuse, we all know that in October, 1860, four hundred men might have had the moral effect of ten thousand. The Southern leaders would have seen that, whatever the national will might be—whether the Presidential choice was Breckinridge or Douglas, Lincoln or Bell—it would be sustained. Gen. Scott's plan strikes us as feasible. It would have shown the conspirators that the power of the Republic was behind the popular will, and that any step in aggression would be met with a blow; that they might reason and rail, but not rebel. Mr. Buchanan intimates the fear that any course like that suggested by Scott would have been "calculated to excite" the Rebels' "indignation, and drive them to extremities." He wished to "refrain from any act which might provoke or encourage the Cotton States into secession, but to smooth the way for such a Congressional Compromise as had in times past happily averted danger from the Union."

Let us consider this for a moment, as it involves the beginning and the end of Mr. Buchanan's argument. He saw before him, on the one hand, a people quietly performing a duty in electing the man of their choice to the Presidency. It was a natural, inevitable, proper act. On the other hand, he saw a baffled and discomfited minority, who proclaimed that the performance of that act would be regarded and resented as a crime. Its leaders were engaged in warlike preparation. They were building batteries and forming military organizations; and, while preparing to fight, asserted, in the words of Mr. Pryor's celebrated resolution, that any attempt to prevent their treason would be "destructive to republican liberty." What Mr. Pryor and his friends wanted was time. What Mr. Buchanan gave them was time. Mr. Toombs, in many respects the ablest man in the Rebellion, the very type of a revolutionist, seconded the words of Mr. Pryor, and placed an everlasting comment upon Mr. Buchanan by openly and with impunity counseling the capture of Fort Pulaski by Georgia Rebels. These were the men whom our President was afraid to "drive" to "extremities!" The counsel of Toombs was treason; and yet that counsel was publicly given and publicly followed. This leader knew the President; and, in addition to recommending the capture of a national fort, said of the Rebellion, that he "felt it was a revolution. We must stay in and win." The Nation likewise saw this. Here was a Senator proposing to usurp the Government by staying in and winning; in other words, by driving Lincoln out of office and placing Mr. Davis in his place. There was wisdom in this daring thought, and, had it been followed, the revolution of 1861 might have been of a different character. Toombs saw a party in the North professedly willing to join a usurped republic. A Philadelphia meeting cheered disunion. Wall-st. believed Toombs and appreciated Buchanan, for it advanced the price of the Southern State stocks as the States seceded. Wall-st. saw a trembling President on his knees, and staked its money that he would remain there. The fabled Afrite was rising. The old pro-Slavery feeling was carrying its aggressions into the North. In January, we read of an anti-Slavery meeting being broken up in New-York, while Mr. Phillips was mobbed in Boston. All this while, Toombs and his friends were organizing Rebellion; the forts were being circumvallated; the Rebels were discussing the policy of abolishing "universal white suffrage" in the South; and a government was being created at Montgomery. While Jefferson Davis was accepting his "Presidency," Mr. Buchanan directed Gen. Scott to write that "the Government *does not contemplate* calling any troops here (Washington) other than the District militia and some detachments of regular troops, and it is desired by the friends of peace that no organized societies or clubs, *even without arms*, shall make their appearance here until the tranquillity of the public mind is restored." The ex-President argues in this volume that he had no power to call out the troops. Four years ago, he directed Gen. Scott to say that it was not the want of power but of will. We quote Mr. Buchanan, the President of 1861, as the best witness against Mr. Buchanan, the writer of 1865.

What the Southerners wanted was time. Mr. Buchanan granted it. On the 9th of January, the Rebels fired into the *Star of the West*. This was an act of treason. How was it met? Here was an insult to the national dignity—a crime which could not be condoned without confessing national cowardice. Let us see what Mr. Buchanan's state of mind was at this time. When South Carolina sent Commissioners to him in December, 1860, "it was a happy omen." When Major Anderson transferred his command from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, electrifying the nation by his intrepidity, Mr. Buchanan felt "regret." He was not, therefore, in the frame of mind to grow pensive or irascible over a harmless shot. Why was no answer made to those Rebel guns? Because, we are told, Major Anderson had granted a truce, and the President could not break it! A truce to allow a messenger to bring a demand of surrender from Gov. Pickens to the President! The messenger came, arriving in Washington January 13, 1860. He might have delivered his demand and ended the truce; but, at the request of Mr. Davis and others, he remained until the 30th—*two weeks and three days*—without presenting his note. Davis gained nearly three weeks by this maneuver, when days were years to his cause. The President permitted this treasonable trifling, and now innocently says that he could not terminate the truce because the Commissioner would not give him the letter, but persisted in "vexatious delay." Three golden weeks gone, and the executive power of the Nation paralyzed by a vagrant Carolinian gasconading around the Washington hotels! Those dreary, dreary hours! How we looked longingly for one particle of courage or brawn in the White House, only to see a President trembling and limp. Mr. Bayard Taylor at the time expressed the national feeling in a satire, so exquisitely true and natural that it became wonderfully popular:

> "The first mate hurled his trumpet down,
> The old tars cursed together,
> To see the good ship helpless roll
> At the sport of wave and weather.
> The tattered sails are all aback,
> Yards crack and masts are started;
> And the captain weeps and says his prayers,
> Till the hull lie 'midships parted."

The Commissioner finally made his demand for the surrender of Sumter and went home. The truce was broken! Why not now avenge the treason? Carolina was not ready. Major Anderson, according to Secretary Holt, was acting under orders "to stand strictly on the defensive." Mr. Buchanan forgets this when he gently chides Major Anderson for not bombarding Fort Moultrie when the *Star of the West* was assailed, and not putting on him the responsibility of directing that bombardment. Here again Mr. Buchanan, the writer, is best answered by Mr. Buchanan, the President, through Secretary Holt. He cannot fasten upon Major Anderson the shameful humiliation which he permitted America to suffer.

More time was wanted; and we had the Peace Conference—a Virginia scheme to postpone hostilities. John Tyler came on a mission of "reconciliation," and succeeded so well that he gained twenty-two more days, and left Mr. Buchanan but two weeks' government. The truce which Gen. Scott subsequently denounced, and which Mr. Buchanan elaborately explains and defends, was really a truce. It gave the South the start. It allowed the people of Charleston to make their harbor so strong that twenty thousand men could not, according to Major Anderson, rescue Fort Sumter. We see now, and the country saw then, that all these delays were intended to gain time. The South meant war, and meant to begin when it got ready. Mr. Buchanan gave it this time, and threw upon Mr. Lincoln a disgusted and paralyzed North, a prepared and vindictive South. Those who criticize Mr. Lincoln for what is called his tampering with Fort Sumter, should dwell upon this fact. Mr. Lincoln found the South armed and ready, burning for war—the North dormant and weary with the hundred days of cowardice and trifling. Mr. Buchanan had the opportunity; Mr. Lincoln had not—and it is for sacrificing this opportunity that we censure our author to-day. His defense does not rescue him. He tells us he had no law to authorize the raising of troops. Mr. Lincoln found law in public necessity and raised troops, although no law was passed by Congress until eight days after the battle of Bull Run.

The long protracted controversy with Gen Scott, on the subject of the "truce" is closed by the publication of this book. While we do not think that Gen. Scott fully appreciated the moral duty of the hour by recognizing the sin of Slavery, he was enough of a soldier to see that there was nothing more humiliating than to furl the Union colors before Rebel guns. In this, as in other respects, he differed from the President. He would not have hanged Robert Toombs. He would have hanged nobody. His policy was essentially peaceful. He saw in war a greater danger than disunion, because to him war meant not only disunion, but the attendant horrors of debt, and death, and desolation. Therefore, if these people would go, let them. "Wayward sisters," he thought, "depart in peace. You will be glad to come back to the comforts of the old home, the pin-money, the fatted calf and family fire. Go, and let us have no words about it! But if you attempt, in the act of going, to dishonor the nation's flag, we must, as soldiers, punish you." This was the substance of Gen. Scott's philosophy. The nation, however, saw only an old soldier who had commanded their grandfathers fifty years before, a great soldier in the days of Wellington and Bonaparte, the hero of two wars, the trusted commander of the American Army during three-fourths of the Republic's existence, contending with Rebels, and demanding ships and guns and troops, and craving to be permitted to go to Charleston Bay, as he had gone thirty years before, when he silenced the fathers of these very fire-eaters. So, while the philosophy of Gen. Scott was but little different from that of Mr. Buchanan, the very fact that there was a contingency in which he would not be a non-resistant brought him close and dear to the American heart. How we loved that stately, tottering old man, and fired guns in his honor, and wrote songs about him, and cheered him in the theaters, and prayed that God would lengthen his days, and blessed his "good, gray head that all men knew." The war is done, the great drama is over, the puppets have played their part, the curtain has fallen; giants have come and gone, new names have arisen from tanneries and village courts to be forevermore remembered with Washington and Franklin, but "the good, gray head" still remains. America has no worthier son, and when the bell tolls, and the minute guns sound slowly, and the drums are muffled, we shall think of him not as at Lundy's Lane, nor Chepultepec, but as the one American of a degenerate Administration who resented the dishonor of his flag.

During all these events, we find on the part of Mr. Buchanan no fixed purpose. He never apparently seemed to forget that the Democratic party was not the country, and that there was a power higher even than the dictates of partisan Conventions. The ocean was upon him, and he mopped it with a compromise; but the waves were not to be stayed with a broom. Therefore, every step, while it probably meant peace, really hastened war. He was in the hands of bad men. His Cabinet were the leaders of the conspiracy. We believe he wanted peace. We cannot but feel that, if he could have turned aside destiny, he would have given his life; for there is nothing in his history to make us suppose that he really designed to hurry on the crimes and calamities of Rebellion. He was a weak man with the work of a giant. He had seen "dangers" before, had "saved" the Union twenty times, when the only necessary salvation was surrender to Slavery; and he did not know but that he could again bring the North to its knees. The spirit of aggression, however, had gone abroad. Anti-Lecompton had done its work. John Brown's soul was walking the earth, and the American people were instinct with resistance to the "sum of all villainies." If Mr. Buchanan had caught the nation's thought—if he could have felt any of the enthusiasm that burned and glowed in every loyal heart—he would have taken Robert Toombs and hanged him when he advised the capture of Fort Pulaski. There are opportunities in men's lives which make them Cæsars and Napoleons; but only Cæsars and Napoleons can grasp them. We do not imagine that the execution of Robert Toombs would have subdued the South, but it would have so strengthened and intensified the national sentiment that the Rebellion would have been overwhelmed by the tumultuous waves of Northern patriotism. The war would have begun in January; but it would have given the North the advantage of being three months ahead. This advantage was surrendered to the South; and it gave us Bull Run.

This, then, was Mr. Buchanan's mistake, for we do not see any evidence of crime. The weak old gentleman imagined that a wordy compromise would end the strife. He was not alone in such fancies. Those who condemn Mr. Buchanan for treason in turning his face from the future, should remember that Mr. Seward was of the same opinion; that he felt it would be a sixty days' war, and might be prevented by a use of the franking privilege. Yet Mr. Seward's conservatism, his toying with events, the cooling, misty speeches that neither meant peace nor war, but fell upon the country like so many fogs, did not prevent him from becoming, in his way, and at the time, a most useful and accomplished statesman. As a diplomatist, Mr. Buchanan would have excelled, just as Mr. Seward has excelled. But he wanted the nerve, the fire, the daring heart and the iron hand; and so, when Rebellion burst out, he took up his pen and began to write most furiously. As if ink could wash away the sin of centuries! While he wrote, the Rebels advanced. They came from Montgomery to Richmond, surging into Maryland, advancing to New-York and Philadelphia, and becoming almost as fashionable as the opera. The Southern leaders became insolent. They saw this old gentleman scribbling away, writing, writing, writing—writing orders in the morning, and writing cancelations in the afternoon, while under his roof traitors were arranging a new Government, and speaking of him as a foreign ruler, and in every Southern State the anvils were ringing, the looms were humming, and everything betokened war. They saw this weak old gentleman paralyzed by a gasconading "Commissioner," and felt that no victory could be more easy than the triumph of Slavery, and that a race of Yankee Buchanans might be whipped in sixty days, if by chance they fought at all. They did not see behind him Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, and Illinois, and the shadow of old John Brown!

The lesson that Mr. Buchanan's fate must teach is this: that no ruler can succeed who distrusts the people. Here was Lincoln's great success. He went with the nation. If it wanted to fight, he would make war. If it wanted peace, he would be the most amiable of men. Politics has no genius higher than common sense, and Mr. Lincoln was eminently sensible. Mr. Buchanan was not. His ways were fixed. He had been raised in the mysterious school of Pennsylvania politics, and had an intense respect for the things called "conventions." So the nation ran ahead of him. He could not understand what it all meant. There was nothing about it in the Cincinnati Platform, and it puzzled him. He had been going round and round in his constitutional tread-mill for fifty years, and he could not bear to strike off into new paths. He lost the confidence of the nation. When Major Anderson disobeyed his orders, guns were fired for Anderson. When Cass resigned, and "threw his trumpet down," the act was cheered. When Gen. Scott sent down the Star of the West, he was instantly called upon to take the Presidency in his own hands; and when, one day, the old gentleman put on his uniform, and got into a carriage, and rode out to see a company of soldiers, the nation was on the point of taking him by force and placing him in the White House. After the attack upon the Star of the West, peace became an impossibility. The blow had been given, and we had slunk away—with burning, blushing cheek—from Rebels! We had lost our national manhood, and upon Mr. Buchanan was visited all the mortification of insult and defeat.

The generation that felt that blow can never forgive the man who permitted it to pass unrevenged. But we trust and believe the future will not be so harsh. The last five years must have been full of bitter days to James Buchanan. To live in silence, and retirement, and obloquy—his name the most detested, with the exception of Jefferson Davis, of any name in America—to sit in his home, with the years rapidly bending him into the grave, and feel that, after so much power and honor, and, above all, so many opportunities, he was the most unpopular of Americans—to feel this and yet to know that he was partly the victim of fate, that, after all, he had been merely a whirling mariner in a hurricane—the weakest, most muddled, most distracted seaman, it is true, that ever went out upon the salt seas, and that for the life of him he could not tell whether the ship was on her keel or beam-ends—that his statesmanship was scribbling and praying, and that he meant to do what was best, even while doing the worst—to sit and hear nothing but imprecations from a people he had served for 50 years, to be cursed by mothers who had lost their children, to have no friends even among the people of the South, for whom he sacrificed all—this is a retribution more terrible than that of Belisarius wandering in poverty and blindness, or the discrowned Lear, on the storm-beaten moor, wielding his scepter of straw. This is passing away. We trust we are becoming more just to James Buchanan. We see now how very small he was when confronted by the majestic and terrible events of the Secession Drama! Destiny cruelly placed him—a mere politician and writer of resolutions—in a position that would have tried the sublimest statesmanship in the world. He did as well as his nature would permit him, and the best of us can do no more.